

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane comprising at least one layer comprising a needled fiber web which is compressed to a porosity of between 60% and 95%, and which comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, wherein the fiber web is needled in one step and compressed to the porosity of between 60% and 95% in a subsequent step, wherein the burner membrane is not sintered, wherein the stainless steel fibers are made from a high temperature alloy.

14. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the porosity of the compressed needled fiber web is between 80% and 95%.

15. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 5 μm and 150 μm .

16. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 15, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10 μm and 50 μm .

17. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 400 g/m^2 and 4000 g/m^2 .

18. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 17, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2 .

19. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, which is provided with a regular pattern of perforations over at least a portion of its surface.

20. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein said steel fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

21. (Withdrawn) Method of manufacturing a burner membrane according to Claim 13, comprising the following steps:

- (a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;
- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to said porosity.

22. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method comprising the following steps:

- (a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;
- (b) needling the fiber web; and
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity to form a

burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step;

wherein the membrane is not sintered and wherein the metal fibers are made from a high temperature alloy.

23. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

24. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method consisting of the following:

- a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers, wherein the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10 μm and 50 μm ;
- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity of between 80% and 95% to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step; and

(d) perforating the burner membrane in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface with a laser;

wherein the membrane is not sintered, wherein the weight of the fiber web is between 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2 , and wherein the metal fibers are made from a high temperature alloy.

25. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

26. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

27. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

28. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

29. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the desired porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

30. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately $10 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and $50 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$.

31. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2 .

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the needed fiber web is formed from one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

34. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

35. (Previously Presented) The burner membrane of Claim 13, wherein the burner membrane is coated with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

36-37. (Cancelled)

38. (Withdrawn) Burner membrane according to Claim 22, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

39. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein substantially all of the volume of the burner membrane is in a compressed state.

40. (Previously Presented) A burner component for a gas burner, comprising a surface burner comprising the burner membrane of Claim 13.

41. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2 .

42. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately $10 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and $50 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$.

43. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

44. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

45. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

46. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

47-50. (Cancelled)

51. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the burner membrane is adapted to be a burner membrane for a surface burner.

52. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the stainless steel fibers are made from a high temperature oxidation resistant alloy.

53. (Cancelled).

54. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the stainless steel fibers have an elemental composition consisting essentially of Al, Cr, Y and a balance Fe.

55. (Currently Amended) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the stainless steel fibers have an elemental composition of ~~22% by weight Cr, about 5-6% by weight Al, an addition of Y, the balance being Fe~~ up to 20% Cr, 0.5 to 12% Al and 0.1 to 3% Y.

56. (Cancelled)

57. (New) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the stainless steel fibers contain chromium and aluminum.